(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (d) Water borne diseases are a major public health problem in India. According to WHO findings approximately 60% of all the communicable diseases in most of the developing countries including India are water and sanitation related. According to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences although, 80 percent of the country's population has access to clean water, 50 to 60 percent households lack adequate sanitation and this contributes to feco-oral transmission. Several programmes have been launched by the national government to prevent deaths due to diarrhoeal diseases.

The Biotechnology Department is supporting research and development for rota-virus and Cholera vaccines. National Institute of Communicable Diseases has initiated a Disease Surveillance Programme in five pilot districts (Gurgaon in Haryana, Alwar in Rajasthan, Mehsana in Gujarat, Allepy in Kerala and Kolar in Karnataka). The programme inter alia provides establishing of early warning signal mechanism with appropriate laboratory support for detection of outbreaks for timely action.

Several surveys have been carried out at the community level and specifically in the States of Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Orissa. The slum areas of major towns have also been surveyed primarily on children who are largely affected.

The Child Survival and Safe Motherhood Programme (now a component of Rural Child Health Programme) aims at reducing mortality due to diarrhoeal diseases among children under the age of five years by 70 percent by the year 2000 AD. Under the programme standard case management of diarrhoea at all health facilities, supply of ORS packets and education of mothers in home management of a child with diarrhoea and early referral are being undertaken.

Agricultural Workers

*23. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal for bringing a Central legislation for the welfare of agricultural workers is pending for a long time; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be introduced in Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Proposal for enacting a comprehensive law providing for regulation of employment and conditions of service of agricultural workers and for establishing of a welfare fund for financing various welfare activities has been drawn up. Final decision on the proposal has not yet been taken and the same is under Government's consideration. Efforts are being made to finalise a Bill on the subject and introduce it in the Parliament at the earliest.

India's Position vis-a-vis other poor countries in Asia

*24. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India ranks the highest among the poor countries in Asia, as per the study conducted by the Asian Development Bank;

(b) if so, the position of India vis-a-vis other countries; and

(c) whether Government have formulated any ambitious scheme to remove poverty from the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI RATNAMALA DEHARESHWAR SAVANOOR): (a) to (b) As per Asian Development Bank publication titled "Emerging Asia-Changes and Challenges", poverty rate is highest in South Asia at 43 per

cent and within South Asia, India has a poverty rate at 52 per cent. The basis of poverty line adopted in the ADB study is Purchasing Power Parity adjusted $1 a day which is quite different form the criteria followed in India.

(c) There is a three-pronged attack on poverty, i.e., (i) acceleration of economic growth, (ii) human and social development through literacy, education, health, nutrition, meeting the minimum needs, elevation of social and economic status of the weaker sections of the society, etc., and (iii) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and asset-building for the poor. The main among these programmes are the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY), Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Prime Minister's Integerated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP) and Urban Basic Services for Poor (UBSP). A basic Minimum Services programme was launhced last year. A scheme: Million wells Scheme (MWS) and Swarna Jayanthi Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) will be implemented from 1st December, 1997 which will phase out NRY, PMIUPEP and UBSP.

The self-employment and supplementary wage employment programmes would not only continue in the Ninth Plan, but also would be redesigned in order to make them more effective instruments of poverty alleviation. They would also be integrated with the various sectoral programmes as well as the area development programmes within the umbrella of the Panchayati Raj institutions.

MPLAD Scheme in Kerala

*25. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether many irregularities of mismanagement of funds in Kerala under the M.Ps' Local Area Development Scheme have come to Government's notice, as reported in the Pioneer dated 13th March, 1997;

(b) if so, whether Government have been able to pinpoint the persons responsible in each case:

(c) what steps Government have taken in plug the loopholes in the working of the scheme; and

(d) the incidents of such mismanagement of MPLAD funds reported by M.Ps in other States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI RATNAMALA DEHARESHWAR SAVANOOR): (a) and (b) A complaint was received about frequently changing the accounts for keeping MPLADS funds, resulting into loss of interest. Report received from District Authorities reveals that the Bank Authorities have allowed interest for the period of FDs when it was broken prematurely. They have also allowed interest for the period when the amount was kept in current accounts.

(c) Instructions have been issued to the District Heads to open separat Personal Ledger Account for each Member of Parliament and to account for interest occurred on year to year basis.

(d) No such other instance has been brought to the notice of this Department.

Complaints against Haj Committee

*26. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are keen to bring changes in the Haj Act, if so by when Government are going to introduce a Bill in this regard;

(b) whether Government have received complaints against the present Haj Committee, if so, what is the nature of complaints;

(c) what action has been initiated by Government in this regard; and

(d) whether Government would order an enquiry into the complaints?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) The Government is actively considering a replacement for the existing Haj Committee Act of 1959 and is working on the draft Bill for being